

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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EC BRUSSELS FOR MARTIN

ROME FOR FODAG

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN DAKAR APRIL 3,
FROM BAMAKO REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE:

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAID, ML

SUBJECT: MALI' S AIRLIFT OF GRAIN

1. THREE GERMAN AIR FORCE PLANES (C-160' S) LEFT TODAY FOR GERMANY AFTER THREE WEEKS OF AIRLIFTING JUST UNDER 500 TONS OF GRAIN FROM BAMAKO TO REMOTE MALIAN TOWNS OF BIMTUKTU, GOUNDAM AND NIORO. TWO PLANES ARRIVED MARCH 14 AND THE THIRD ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO. GERMAN AMBASSDOR CONSIDERS AIRLIFT A POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUCCESS BUT TECHNICALLY DISAPPOINTING. GERMAN PLANES WERE PLAGUED WITH BREAKDOWNS AND IN HIS VIEW GERMAN CREWS MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO MAXIMIZE HAULAGE.

2. SOVIET PLANE (ANTONOV-12) ALSO DEPARTING TODAY AFTER COMPLETION ROUGHLY THREE WEEKS' AIRLIFT. HOWEVER, IT WILL BE
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REPLACED BY ANOTHER ANTONOV-12 WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS, WHICH ACCORDING TO SOVIET COUNSELOR WILL REMAIN HERE UP TO TWO MORE MONTHS. SOVIET PLANE, WHICH SO FAR HAS BEEN OPERATING PRINCIPALLY TO GAO BUT ALSO ON OCCASION TO BOUREM AND TESSALIT, HAS SO FAR ONLY HAULED JUST OVER 500 TONS. SOVIET AMBASSADOR ADMITS THIS TONNAGE IS DROP- IN- BUCKET COMPARED WITH SIXTH REGION' S NEEDS AND HOPES TO STEP UP SOVIET HAUL. HE SAYS SOVIET AIRLIFT IS CHEAPEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE ACTION TAKEN BY SOVIETS IN WEST AFRICA IN YEARS.

3. BOTH GERMAN AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS TOLD ME THAT MALIAN SUPPORT OF AIRLIFT IS OUTSTANDING. UNDER DIRECTION MALIAN ARMY, TRUCKS WITH ENOUGH GRAIN AND ENOUGH LOADERS ALWAYS AT AIRPORT, AND ON TIME. SAME TRUE OF UNLOADING. PLANES HAD TO PROVIDE ALL SPARE PARTS AND MAINTENANCE, BUT AVIATION GAS SUPPLIES FULLY ADEQUATE. GOOD QUARTERS FOR CREWS AND ACCEPTABLE FOOD OFFERED TO CREWS AT UNOPENED HOTEL DE L' AMITIE IN BAMAKO, BUT SOVIETS TURNED DOWN OFFER.

4. SEVERAL MINISTERS HAVE SPOKEN TO ME WITH DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT US INABILITY TO PROVIDE PLANE FOR AIRLIFT AND HAVE INDICATED THEY HOPED WE WOULD HELP LATER. THEY POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET AND GERMAN PLANES WILL NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LIFT ENOUGH GRAIN TO SUPPLY REMOVE NORTHERN SECTIONS FIRST, SECOND, FIFTH AND SIXTH REGIONS IN PERIOD BEFORE NAVIGATION ON NIGER POSSIBLE IN AUGUST. MALIANS ALSO LOOKING FOR HELP IN AIRLIFTING PUMPS, ETC., FROM DAKAR AND ABIDJAN . MALIANS APPEAR TO BE FULLY AND EFFICIENTLY USING THEIR OWN RESOURCES AND DESERVE ANY HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT WE CAN GIVE. GIVEN GROWING GRAVITY OF FOOD AND CATTLE SITUATION AS HOT SEASON INTENSIFIES, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD KEEP OPEN OPTION OF MAKING US PLANES AVAILABLE TO RENDER EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. BLAKE UNQUOTE ROGERS

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